

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

February 8, 2011

The regular meeting of the Planning Board held in Performance Center of the Eliot School, was called to order by Ron Ruth, Chairman, on Tuesday, February 8, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. with Messrs. Warner, Eisenhut and Jacobs and Ms. McKnight as well as Planning Director, Ms. Newman and Recording Secretary, Donna Kalinowski.

Public Hearings

7:30 p.m. – Major Project Site Plan Review No. 2011-01: The Continental Wingate Development Company, 63 Kendrick Street, Needham, Massachusetts, Petitioner (Property located on the westerly side of Gould Street between the Wingate at Needham Nursing Home at 589 Highland Avenue and the MBTA Right of Way).

Mr. Ruth noted this is a continued hearing. Roy Cramer, representative for the applicant, noted this is an assisted living facility. He gave the Board a signed application. They have been to the Design Review Board and they have approved both projects. The property is 5 acres of land off Gould Street and 2 acres with Wingate. Last year the property was rezoned and this allowed them to apply for a nursing home, assisted living and individual living facilities. Nursing home and assisted living and independent living are special permit uses. They propose in Phase 1 to construct 20 individual units and 20 assisted living units specializing in Alzheimer's and memory loss and 40 regular units. It will be 112,000 square feet including basement and garage or 82,788 square feet without the basement and garage. The bulk of the parking will be underground with 19 surface spaces. There will be 67 spaces in the garage. Originally it was 2 separate buildings with a building in front of the property by Gould Street. They may do Phase 2 in the future. They want to integrate 5.1.1.3(j). They need a 4 foot landscape buffer on the driveway that currently leads to Gould Street. Engineering's view is the proper location is to be across from 5 TV Place so they are moving it 20 to 30 feet. It nicks a corner of the nursing home parcel so the required 4 foot setback from lot line is less than 4 feet. It cannot be landscaped if it is a driveway.

They are asking for a waiver from 5.1.3(a) – 1 foot candles. They do not want spillage and brightness. The parking requirement is 62 and they have 86 spaces. They are reserving 24 spaces and anticipate in Phase 2 they may need some parking. There are easement agreements between the 2 parcels to allow traffic to move between.

7:45 p.m. – Amendment to Major Project Site Plan Review No. 1993-03: The Continental Wingate Development Company, 63 Kendrick Street, Needham, Massachusetts, Petitioner (Property located at 589 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA).

Mr. Ruth suggested they open both hearings and discuss them simultaneously. Mr. Cramer stated they are creating easements for parking and there will be an open area on the nursing home parcel for residents and families and will be available for all. There will be an affordable component in the individual living. He has spoken with Judy Barrett and she will serve as a monitoring agent for the affordable units if necessary. The affordable units need to be counted in the town's numbers.

David Kelley, of Kelley Engineering Group, noted they have developed a locus plan for the neighborhood. The lot is bounded by the railroad, Gould Street, the existing facility and Cross Street in the back. The nursing home property is bounded by Gould Street, Highland Avenue and the Putnam Street neighborhood. He has spent time with the Evelyn Road owners and is looking at their properties. The proposed site is a little under 5 acres. There is no drive currently but a limited access drive. The proposed drive lines up with the property across the street. The drive is close to the existing rear drive to the nursing home. The parking garage will be located behind the building and will be a full floor.

Mr. Kelley noted the plan has substantially changed due to feedback. There were concerns regarding height, location, disturbance of the slope in back and the number of parking spaces. He noted the elevation of Gould Street is 246 +or- and 225-227 at the lowest. The railroad elevation is 250 +or-, and toward Putnam it rises to 254 or 255. They are taking advantage of the low area and putting basement parking. There is a less impervious surface and more ability to buffer the site from the abutters. They can retain the slope along the back. The building is at an elevation of 246 and the garage is at 234. The FAR is .41. They are trying to create a campus type environment. There will be a central entrance and a boulevard entry will allow people to choose the proposed facility or nursing home. The height is 6 feet less than the past plans. Considerable buffers will be maintained. All utilities are available on or near the site. Sewer will be gathered in a tank and pretreatment device, will go up the drive across Gould to a gravity main in TV Place. The appropriate easements need to be gathered. A whole portion of Needham goes to Reservoir B pumping station which is currently a temporary pumping station.

Mr. Ruth noted a letter from Town Engineer Tony DelGaizo, dated 2/8/11, raising questions and with comments regarding utilities including the pumping station discussed.

Mr. Kelley noted he asked the DPW for 2 options for treatment of sewage. One is the Reservoir pumping station if it is repaired in time. The other is working with the DPW to identify areas in the Reservoir watershed area where sewers are in the worst condition or areas where there is high ground water. Once identified, they would come up with a plan to repair those areas. Water, gas and electric are all available on site and drainage is on site. They are at a low point in this area of the neighborhood. All the surrounding properties drain into this property. It has very well drained gravel on site as it was a gravel quarry. They have mined most gravel out but left an area where the large depression is. It is leeching into the ground at a rapid rate. The challenge is to develop the property in a way that does not change that. They have hired a technical engineer to identify the gravel area, the limits of it and the total area for it. They ran under the depression area and detention and recharge areas were created.

He stated 2 large perforated pipes that run the length of the railroad right of way will travel by groundwater. The water is being treated on site and there are many safety factors built in.

Andrew Stebbins, architectural design, noted this is a 3-story, 82,000 square foot wood frame building. It will be clapboard with asphalt shingles and roof accents. There will be a common area and a service entrance with kitchen services for 80 units. The Alzheimer's wing will have its' own kitchen, dining room and courtyard. Upstairs will be straightforward individual living units and assisted living.

David Hawke, of Hawke Design, stated they have created a campus feel with the use of open spaces. There will be stone walls on both sides of the entry and a possible change of pavement, then a meandering roadway and manicured lawn. There will be a gently contoured area with screening for a service road with a 6 foot fence. The courtyards will have landscaped gardens. The memory courtyard will have seating and landscaping.

There will be a small amphitheater between the 2 buildings. It will be very visual. There will be a gazebo at the high point. There will be 62 canopy trees, 511 shrubs and 38 evergreen trees catering to the residential feel. The lighting will be gooseneck, 14 feet up in the air with the bulbs recessed into the fixture. The walkway will have some bollards to light up the walk that connects the 2 properties.

Mr. Warner asked if any sugar maples will be planted. They are all around Needham and he feels they should have some continuity. Giles Hamm, of Vanasse Associates, detailed the traffic study. There will be 14-23 new trips. He noted the staff shifts are at non-peak – 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. They feel most of the residents do not drive.

They are recommending no left turn out onto Highland Avenue with a right turn only sign. They will have some internal signs as well.

Mr. Eisenhut commented on the Design Review Board memo of 1/3/11 and asked if there will be bollards in the pathways. He was informed they will have some. He noted they would like wood fencing rather than stockade. That is fine.

Ms. McKnight noted they discussed emergency egress to the street to the west. She does not see that. Mr. Cramer noted they were thinking about that but the abutters did not like it. The Fire Department and DPW did not think it was necessary. The 2 egresses are sufficient and they will keep the landscaping. Ms. McKnight asked if Needham Housing Authority or Needham Opportunities Inc. were not interested in monitoring the affordable units. Mr. Cramer stated he has spoken with the Chair and they are planning on closing the door essentially. He noted Ron Stegman at the Housing Authority is looking at a 5-year plan. They are planning on scaling down. They feel it is bad timing for further responsibilities.

Ms. McKnight asked if the Finance Committee would move the pump station forward or if that was unrelated. Mr. Cramer noted it was unrelated. He added the work on the infrastructure is their contribution. Ms. McKnight noted the plan shows sidewalks along Gould Street. It was noted this is the existing sidewalk. Mr. Kelley stated it is in relatively good condition and they will connect to it.

Ms. McKnight noted there was a greenhouse and asked if it was functional on the north side of the building. She was informed there is some west exposure and it is a good area for landscaping. Ms. McKnight noted there is a drain pipe easement to the north. Mr. Cramer stated there is no drain pipe to the north. It will be on site.

Mr. Ruth noted the following correspondence for the record: a memo from Town Engineer Anthony DelGaizo, dated 2/8/11; a memo from Patricia Barry, of the Conservation Commission, dated 2/7, with comments; an e-mail, dated 2/5/11, from Sherri Meek of 49 Evelyn Road; a correspondence from the Design Review Board, dated 1/3/11; an e-mail, dated 2/3/11, from Andy Effenson of Evelyn Road with a request to hold off on the vote; an e-mail from Terence Ryan, dated 2/3/11, requesting they not close the hearing; a letter, dated 2/3/11, from Carlyn and Dennis Uyenoyama with comments; an e-mail from Janice Berns, of the Board of Health; a memo, dated 2/1/11, from Fire Chief Paul Buckley with comments and a memo, dated 1/26/11, from Police Lt. John Kraemer.

Teresa Combs, of 7 Utica Road, noted she is concerned employees cut over her street. There will be more staff and more people waiting to avoid the light at Highland and Gould. There are a number of children there. Mr. Cramer stated they will put a sign for a right turn only so they do not go straight across. This is a concern of theirs also. Ms. Combs stated snow removal is an issue. This will be a bigger disruption to neighbors with more parking. Residents are there to convalesce. She is woken up at 2:00 a.m., 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. by plows. She asked if people could still go out on to Highland Avenue rather than use Gould Street. Giles Ham noted they can but the increase in traffic is expected to be very low.

Ms. McKnight noted there is an island in the middle of Highland Avenue. She asked would a barrier in the middle of Highland Avenue to prevent straight access be feasible? Ms. Combs noted currently it does not extend that far but it is a step in the right direction. Mr. Cramer stated they would not be able to take a left into Wingate from Highland Avenue.

Ms. Combs stated she did not understand the affordable part of this. Will people buy? Steve Levin, proponent, noted they will all be rental units. Ten percent of the units will be affordable.

Andy Effenson, of 87 Evelyn Road, asked about the sight lines, landscapes and sound mitigations. He asked what they will be seeing from Evelyn Road. The landscape architect noted with the sight line being higher they will be looking into the canopy. He feels there is an effective buffer there already. They will be planting some trees in the courtyards and will have a natural buffer there.

Mr. Kelley noted they may see the upper floor from Evelyn Road. He added the building is lower and further away. Mr. Ruth asked how close it is to the railroad. Mr. Kelley noted it is 32 feet to the closest point of the railroad. They would like to get permission from the railroad to do some sloping and plantings.

Dennis Uyenoyama, of 73 Evelyn Road, noted there is no pipe going north but there is a 7-foot wide infiltration pipe. He asked if it could be moved. Mr. Warner asked if they had water in their basement. Mr. Uyenoyama stated they did have water this past spring. Carlyn Uyenoyama asked if the drainage is going to maintain or improve conditions. She noted people closer to the depression got more water than they did. She asked what happens if it does not work? It has not been tried yet. She noted their biggest concern is drainage. Treating water is also a concern. She is really worried about sewage. They are adding 12,000 gallons more a day. There are a lot of unknowns. She asked about noise ordinances, normal construction type of regulations, safety and water pollution. She stated she supports an elderly facility but she thinks they should pay the commercial tax rate. She implored the committee not to vote tonight. She stated she feels strongly about the unknowns. She is not necessarily against this. She just wants to make sure.

Sherri Meek, of 49 Evelyn Road, stated she had flooding last year for 2 weeks. She feels water is going to flow out into her back yard. She wants to understand the path of the water.

Terence Ryan, of 79 Evelyn Road, noted there is a 7 foot pipe but also 2 off shoots of that pipe that go to 2 drywells. When Phase 2 is developed that is another area that will not have drainage. He requested they hold off on a decision tonight.

Barry Charton, of 62 Putnam Street, stated he had 2 concerns -- the noise pollution with trash pickup early and employee noise. He would like assurances those issues will be dealt with. He noted they are management issues -- snow removal, shifts end at 11:00 p.m. and trash removal. With the traffic, if they force a right turn only, he is concerned they may turn onto Putnam to go left on Highland Avenue.

Mr. Warner asked if there was any way to establish what the current situation is and how things are now. Mr. Kelley noted the groundwater is 22 feet + or - elevations. He stated they did have a very wet year this year. They are never going to have all the answers. They have designed a system that will ensure water will leave the site at a slower rate than it currently does. They are confident this will work.

Mr. Ruth asked if they did a storm water analysis. Mr. Kelley noted a full storm water analysis was done. They reviewed it with the DPW to come up with an appropriate system for this site.

Ms. McKnight asked about noise regarding snow removal and asked to what extent are there going to be more paved areas. Mr. Kelley noted there are 25,000 square feet on one half acre. The total site is less than an acre of the pervious surface. Ms. McKnight asked what the new area that needs to be kept clear of snow is. Mr. Kelley stated approximately one half acre or a 30 or 40 car area.

Mr. Levin noted Muzi currently uses the lot for snow storage. This will not continue with this project. Ms. Uyenoyama stated the snow is piled very high. It has been an extremely bad year and she suggests they do more work on that before they break ground because it will change.

Mr. Eisenhut informed her the operational issues will be laid out in the permits. There are restrictions. He added that enforcement issues should be brought to the attention of the Board.

Mr. Jacobs questioned the traffic flow on the site. Mr. Ham noted they want to connect the sites. Mr. Jacobs asked what if all traffic flows onto Gould Street. They could come in on Highland Avenue or Gould but exit to Gould. He asked if that caused problems. He feels it will solve some problems but will it create others?

Mr. Ham stated there is very minor increase to Highland Avenue. Mr. Levin feels the police and fire will have an issue. Mr. Cramer noted closing the curb cut will create more issues. Mr. Jacobs commented making an entry only has an appeal for him.

Mr. Ryan stated snow removal is an existing agreement. He added the grassy area is ledge rock so water will not be going down.

Joseph Pichetti, owner of 40 Arbor Street and 26 Cross Street, noted all water on Cross, Putnam and Highland Avenue is torrential. It all drains down. He asked what will happen to all that water. Mr. Kelley stated they have to deal with 9 acres of watershed. They are installing drainage, picking up water and sending it to the drain pipe. They have to do it.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to continue the hearing to 3/1/11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Public Services Administration Building.

Minutes

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Ms. McKnight, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to approve the minutes of 1/18/11 with changes.

Review of Potential Zoning Articles.

The Board reviewed the 10 potential articles. There are 2 more citizen's petitions. They regulate the number of indoor garage spaces and provide flexibility for pergola's on lots. Four will be heard in the spring. Ms. Newman asked which they are thinking of going forward with. She is concerned with the volume. Ms. McKnight asked which were technical amendments? Ms. Newman noted #8 and #9. Ms. McKnight feels they should have them on the warrant and deal with them.

Mr. Ruth clarified the decisions would put a placeholder for the relevant article on the town warrant and would go toward a public hearing. The others will drop off until the fall.

Ms. Newman noted #2 makes sense to do. Three would need an amendment to the general By-Law to allow seating to sidewalks. Some restaurants have expressed interest and she feels this should go forward. She clarified the outdoor seating only. She feels #6 is time sensitive. The use profile they created is too restrictive. She would like to close out #10.

Mr. Jacobs asked about #5. Mr. Ruth stated he felt it would be too difficult. Mr. Jacobs noted they agreed to hearings on that. Maybe it will not go forward but they should listen. Ms. Newman stated she feels the timing is poor and it would be better done in the fall. She sent an e-mail to Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick that they are on a tight time schedule. They may need a public hearing on 3/8/11. She noted #2 and #10 are for the special within the warrant and the rest are in the regular warrant.

Mr. Jacobs urged the group to pick up an amendment to 3.1 as soon as possible. He thinks it is the most important one there. Ms. McKnight stated if they sponsor it she feels they should be generally in favor. There is the remaining issue of sidewalk seating without further study. Ms. Newman noted only seating for restaurants not displays.

Mr. Warner noted he is concerned with the absence of a report from the Engineering Department. The timing is not good.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by four of the five members present (Mr. Jacobs abstained):

VOTED: to not go forward with #1 now.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Ms. McKnight, it was by four of the five members present (Mr. Eisenhut abstained):

VOTED: to go forward with #2.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to go forward with #3 – outdoor seating.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to delay consideration to go forward at this time with #4.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Ms. McKnight, it was by three of the five members present (Mr. Ruth and Mr. Eisenhut voted in the negative):

VOTED: to proceed with #5.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Jacobs, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to go forward with #6.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Eisenhut, and seconded by Ms. McKnight, it was by four of the five members present (Mr. Jacobs abstained):

VOTED: to not go forward with #7 at this time.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to go forward with #8.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to go forward with #9.

Upon a motion made by Ms. McKnight, and seconded by Mr. Warner, it was by the five members present unanimously:

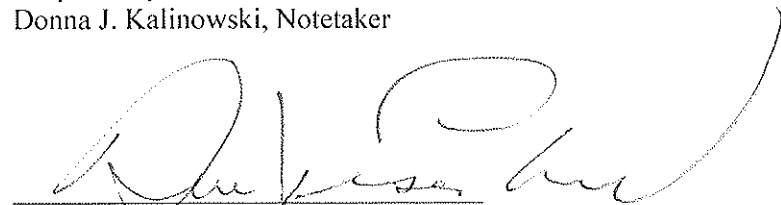
VOTED: to move #10 to Special Town Meeting and go forward with it at the Special.

Ms. Newman noted they will have a meeting on 3/8/11 at 7:00 p.m. for zoning articles. They will have a hearing on NEBC on 4/20/11. The Board signed diminimus changes.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Warner, and seconded by Mr. Jacobs, it was by the five members present unanimously:

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna J. Kalinowski, Notetaker

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bruce Eisenhut", written over a horizontal line.

Bruce Eisenhut, Vice-Chairman and Clerk